

N. Bible, New Testament.

THE TRUE DESIGN
OF
THE CHURCH OF GOD,
AND
THE GOVERNMENT THEREOF,

EXHIBITED BY A SELECTION OF

LAWS,

*698. c. 18.
3.*

FOUNDED ON THE AUTHORITY OF
JESUS CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES,

FAITHFULLY EXTRACTED FROM THE
NEW TESTAMENT;

WITH NOTES CRITICAL & EXPLANATORY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
A FEW BYE-LAWS.

That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which
is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Paul.
If ye love me, keep my commandments. Jesus Christ.

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PREFACE.

AS religion is of a personal nature, and is founded upon the relative situation of man and the revelation which God hath given to him respecting the various obligations he is under, it becomes a matter of the utmost moment that his ideas thereon should be clear and distinct ; for in proportion to that will be his obedience. The gospel dispensation, under which men are, is certainly light in comparison to that of the Jews ; the chief excellency whereof consists in its stimulating power, by the enlarged view of the grace of God which it sets forth. But notwithstanding this has generally been subscribed to by most professors of the Christian name, there have been always some who, like the Jews, have confined its effects to such as embraced their views, and who, in consequence thereof, have been reckoned of their party---a spirit that was

formerly indulged to the manifest perversion of Christianity itself. That the same disposition does not prevail at this time, is perhaps owing to the general indifference that predominates among mankind, who, from enthusiasm, seem to be fast verging to infidelity. It cannot, therefore, be unacceptable to the thinking few to have the means pointed out to cure the one, and prevent the other---which cannot be more effectually done than by presenting to them clear and consistent views of the Scripture, both as to doctrine and discipline, which party views have ever proved a bar to; from whence also men have been afraid to examine for themselves, and consequently have been incapable of beholding the full glory of the Scriptures.

With a view, therefore, of shewing the mistakes men have fallen into by paying a too scrupulous regard to a set of opinions, the following pages are presented; wherein will be found such harmony and consistency as must for ever stamp a value upon the New Testament, in the estimation of every candid inquirer.

The corruptions and false glosses, that have been put upon the Scriptures, have rendered this work necessary; and though there are copious notes added upon the laws herein laid down, it is hoped nothing contrary to the texts themselves will be found: but should that be the case, it will only prove that men with the best intentions are liable to err;

and the compilers are happy in having an opportunity to declare they shall be glad to see every defect pointed out, that the truth itself may stand unrivalled.

It is probable some may not see the utility of the undertaking, and be ready to condemn it; but when it is recollected, that, by taking detached parts of Scripture, its glory has been obscured, one part being thereby frequently opposed to another,---it must surely be evident that, by concentrating its rays, (as is done by this selection) that glory must shine more conspicuously.

Although the number of those who have engaged in this work is small, they trust its beneficial effects will extend to many. As truth they recommend it to the scrutiny of the most scrupulous, without apprehension for the issue, being fully persuaded that it will encrease its value. If it serves in any degree as the means of pointing out the evils of all establishments not founded on the pure principles of the gospel, they will not lose their reward; but it will encrease **their** gratification to find that it paves the way for those who have detached themselves from religious societies from the defects visible therein, to partake of the benefits of Christian communion by directing them to the proper means of establishing a church upon the pure principles of the gospel; for the banner of truth was never more necessary than

at present to be displayed as a rallying point for its scattered followers to flee to.

Recommending, therefore, the work to the candid consideration of all who revere truth, and to God for his blessing, they subscribe themselves their

Servants in the truth,

THE CHURCH.



ADDRESS TO THE CHURCH.

DEAR BRETHREN,

IT is with peculiar satisfaction that your committee, through an indulgent providence, are now enabled to present to you the result of their labours ; and they contemplate, with gratitude, the goodness of God, who has caused such ample instruction to be treasured up in the New Testament, so varied and diffuse, as to answer all the exigencies of the Christian, whether in his private capacity, or in the fellowship of the gospel.

The Laws now selected and submitted to the church not only prove the excellency and sufficiency of the Scriptures for our government ---but, if attended to, cannot fail to wean us from all preconceived opinions, and promote that unity of sentiment among us, so necessary to our welfare ; and while we fully expect to behold the happy effects they will produce among ourselves, we are ready to anticipate the pleasing influence their beauty and consistency will have upon the minds of Christians in general ; and we trust our conduct will evince that a close adherence to the laws of Christ has a tendency not only to strengthen the bond of union, but to render it indissoluble ;

VIII. ADDRESS TO THE CHURCH.

for we are fully persuaded, that where men are divested of party views, and an attachment to human traditions, the commandments of Christ must meet with universal acceptance, especially as it is generally admitted that the doctrines of Christ and his apostles form the most beautiful system of ethics, calculated in the highest degree to promote universal philanthropy and peace. And although we do not yet behold all the effects such a system might be expected to produce, it must be evident, that, wherever the gospel hath been received, (notwithstanding the veil thrown over it by tradition) it hath meliorated the manners of mankind.

One of the greatest obstacles to Christian philanthropy arises from the contrary opinions and contracted views that professors entertain of the character of God: which instead of acknowledging him to be (as the Scriptures affirm) the father of his creatures, a being of infinite purity and impartiality, frequently represent him as a hard master, who makes distinctions among his creatures, merely for the purpose of displaying his sovereign power; electing some of the children of men to the highest enjoyments and felicity, while he is regardless of the rest; leaving (if not absolutely decreeing) them unceasingly to feel the direful effects of his wrath;---a doctrine that not only reflects the highest dishonour upon the character of Jehovah, but is subversive of all morality and virtue, being the principal prop of

infidelity, and that which furnishes the strongest arguments against revelation : for it may be truly said, if any of the doctrines taught in the Scriptures have a tendency to set the attributes of Deity at variance, the divinity of their original may justly be questioned.

In tracing the various directions of Christ and his apostles, and the particular evils they were calculated to guard against or cure, your committee think they have discovered many of the sources of those corruptions with which the church of God hath been deluged : for the fondness of some in adding something to the simple doctrines of the gospel, on one hand, and the negligence and supineness of Christians in resigning their right of judgment on the other, seem to have opened the floodgates of error ; while the setting up one man exclusively to teach such doctrines as are calculated to please the party he is employed by, or to support the tenets they avow, has spread the contagion far and wide ; especially where emoluments have been annexed to the priestly office, which too often influence to *interest* rather than *duty*, inclining men to court the applause of their patrons, rather than promote the cause of truth ; especially as the true design of public preaching was not to instruct the church, but, by travelling from place to place, to call sinners to repentance, who, upon giving proof of their faith and sincerity, by a submission to the ordinance of baptism, were to be united to a church, to be

further instructed in the doctrines of the gospel ; such practices, together with the Scriptures having been represented as open only to those who possess the key of knowledge, (human learning) have served to rivet the chains with which men have bound themselves, rendering the cloud of ignorance, with which they have been enveloped, by these means still more impenetrable.

We trust, however, this veil will shortly be removed, and that men will be inclined (with us) to contemplate the Scriptures with admiration, where the character of Jehovah is set forth, and his designs in providence and grace made known in so glorious a manner as to prove his wisdom, power, and goodness ; and that the revelation we are favoured with is worthy of his character, and perfectly adapted to the condition of man ; for unless these points can be established, it does not appear how gainsayers are to be withstood, particularly such as contend for the exercise of the reasoning faculties ; for it appears to us that the proper basis of truth is the reasonableness and necessity of it ; and, when recommended by these, it becomes incontrovertible.

Your committee are persuaded that it was the glaring errors in the doctrines of the church of Rome, and the tyranny of priests, that first produced a reform : but as all reformations were guided by, or have since dwindled into, party zeal, no partial alteration in doctrine or discipline, can answer the purpose of deliver-

ing the church of God from the shackles of superstition: and, under this impression, they think nothing less than a return to first principles can dissipate error, and promote the knowledge and love of truth.

If the feeble attempt now made should have a tendency to unite Christians together, and influence them to follow our example, by conforming to such laws as the Scriptures enjoin, pure and unmixt with human invention, we shall have cause to rejoice, as such a conduct cannot fail to produce the most beneficial effects; for as error first crept in from a disregard or inattention to the commands of Christ and his apostles, a return to a simple obedience thereof is the only means whereby a purity of manners and a uniformity of sentiment can be produced, such as characterized the first Christians. And should so desirable a change be effected, it is to be hoped that the mistakes of former ages, and the direful consequences thereof, will serve to secure Christians in future from departing from the simplicity of the gospel, as the punishment of Israel in their captivity cured them of idolatry.

The necessity and advantage of a church established upon such principles, cannot but be apparent, where every sentiment can be freely investigated, abstracted from party views or interested motives,---where also the grand fundamental truths of the gospel are strenuously contended for---a privilege, which,

having been given up, has been the true reason of the exaltation of error, at the expence of truth. And here it is necessary for us to point out the difference there now is in the design of the church of God from that at its first establishment; for in the first ages of Christianity it was to preserve truth: but now, by a laborious attention to its true nature, and the nicest examination of every thing presented to us under that name, to search it out, thereby to exhibit it to the world in all its native simplicity and loveliness.-----

Now also the church is the school where young converts are to be instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, which, while they serve to guard them against a fondness for men and their opinions, from viewing their fallibility, enables them clearly to discern the commands of Christ from the dogmas of a party; at the same time enforcing the necessity of maintaining good works, thereby to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into marvellous light, and lead them to improve and exercise those gifts which God bestows upon his church for the edification thereof, by provoking one another to love and good works, and not *leave* that to the *priest* which is the *privilege* of every Christian brother; for we are persuaded, that every church, however small its gifts, is fully competent to its own wants, independent of a *hired* preacher.

Not to enlarge upon the benefit of a society formed upon the proper equality of its mem-

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bers, and the limited authority of those who bear rule therein, who are accountable to the body for the due discharge of the duties of their office, and for whose benefit (not their own emolument or ambition) they are elected; we cannot omit calling your attention to the excellency and beauty of the Christian doctrines and discipline, inculcated in your laws; a submission to which cannot fail to advance the glory of God, the cause of religion, and your honour as a church; *for though a small body, with inconsiderable talents, under many discouragements, professing to be governed thereby, you stand forward as advocates for the unity of the Deity, the universality of his love, for rational religion, and free inquiry; acknowledging also the supremacy of Christ as the only head of the church and way to the Father; influenced by whose bright example, and following whose precepts, you now determine to walk as strangers and pilgrims in this world, unbiassed by its customs and uninfluenced by any honor or advantage it may present; patiently waiting for the reward of your fidelity in the kingdom of Jesus, when he shall claim the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.*

By acting up to the spirit of your laws you cannot fail to become good subjects, good husbands, good wives, good parents, good children, good masters, and good servants; for by thus filling our several stations in society, and

submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, (when such ordinances do not militate against the commands of Christ) and following peace with all men and holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, you will prove yourselves the true disciples of Jesus: for as his kingdom is not of this world, you are restricted from bearing arms on any account, and ought not to interfere with the politics of the world; but rather, as the followers of the Prince of Peace, recommending his doctrine by your examples; as by so doing, you cannot fail to enjoy peace in this life, and ensure your happiness hereafter.

While your committee rejoice in the prospect of the success of their labours, they are sensible much remains to be done; being convinced that it is possible the laws now presented may still need some addition to comprehend every thing necessary for the direction of a church of God; but they flatter themselves, however defective the selection may appear, it will evince the consistency and harmony of the Scriptures, and shew the necessity of their being better known, and of an implicit submission to them, as the best means of promoting our real happiness. They therefore indulge the pleasing expectation, that this partial view of the subject will incline men to make the holy Scriptures their study,

Although every thing necessary to establish these laws may not be set down at large, your committee have endeavoured to select

what appeared best adapted to the various heads under which they are arranged, referring to such other parts of Scripture as tend to confirm the matter more fully ; in some few instances they have added texts that apply to local circumstances and ancient customs ; but where these occur they have generally endeavoured to explain their view of them by a note annexed ; therefore, upon the whole, entertain an earnest hope, that while the church accepts these laws as the rule of their conduct, their labours will not only be acceptable to them, and be in some sort a memorial of their attachment to their service, but, in the end, will be highly beneficial to the Christian world ; serving as a sufficient proof of the excellency of the religion of Jesus ; a submission to which will be the best defence against the baneful influence of infidelity, as well as tend to erect a glorious standard of truth for all serious and enquiring Christians to rally under and flee to, during the desolating judgments that are about to be poured forth upon the antichristian nations ; for the cry is gone forth, “ Behold the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him,” and therefore we ought to attend to the voice of the angel uttered in Rev. xviii. 4. “ Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues ;” for the time is at hand when such as are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles will be manifest, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,

and when a distinction will be made between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

What is subjoined under the head of BYE LAWS, relates only to such regulations as every society stands in need of; designed to provide for certain contingencies, for which no specific directions appear to be laid down in the New Testament, and apply to such rules as have been thought necessary to prevent a perpetuity of office, from whence we conceive many corruptions have sprang. Commending, therefore, the laws to the cordial acceptance of the church, as a sacred deposit of the truth as far as our minds have been led, and them to the special protection of the God of truth, whom we pray to keep and to protect us, we subscribe ourselves your servants in the gospel of his son,

THE COMMITTEE.



LAWS,

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE

CHURCH OF GOD,

&c. &c.

*On the Necessity of a Church separate
from the World.*

COME unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Mat. xi.
28—30.

Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Heb. x.
25.

Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Acts ii. 40.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath 2 Cor. vi.
14—16.

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light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in (*or among*) them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Cor. vi.
17, 18.

Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Titus, ii.
11—14.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The Description of a Church.

KNOW ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit* of God dwelleth in you? For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in (or among) them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit. Eph. ii. 19—22.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Ye are a 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, 25.

* As the presence and spirit of God may be supposed to refer to the power of the word of truth in the hearts of believers they may, without arrogance, claim the title of the Temple of God, though not possessing the miraculous gifts, enjoyed by the first Christian churches.

chosen generation ; a royal priesthood ;
an holy nation ; a peculiar people.

Ye were as sheep going astray, but
are now returned unto the shepherd
and bishop of your souls.

1 Pet. i.
42, 23.

Seeing ye have purified your souls
in obeying the truth, through the spi-
rit, unto unfeigned love of the bre-
thren, see that ye love one another with
a pure heart fervently.

Being born again, not of corrupt-
ible seed, but of incorruptible ; by
the word of God, which liveth and
abideth for ever.

See also Mat. v. 13---16. 1 Tim.
iii. 15. Heb. xii. 22, 23. Col. i. 24.
1 Thes. v. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 10. as expla-
natory.

The Design of a Church.

Eph. ii. 4, 5
6, 7, 10.

BUT God, who is rich in mercy, for
his great love wherewith he loved us
even when we were dead in sins, hath
quickenened us together with Christ,

(By grace ye are saved) and hath
raised us up together, and made us sit
together in heavenly places in Christ
Jesus ;

That in the ages to come he might
shew the exceeding riches of his grace,

in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph. iii. 10, 11.

And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers*, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even

Eph. iv. 11—16.

* This passage appears to relate to the first ages of Christianity, though it evidently points out to us that all the gifts of the church are designed for the general benefit thereof.

Christ : from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh encrease of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 Pet. ii.
5, 9.

To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ : that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Phil. i. 9
—11.

That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment ; that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

See also Eph. v. 25, 27. 1 Cor. i. 2, 10. Mat. v. 13, 14, 16. Heb. x. 25.

The Object of Worship.

Mat. iv.
10.

FOR it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Mat. xxii.
37, 38.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy

soul, and with all thy mind ; this is the first and great commandment.

The hour cometh, and *now* is, John iv. 23, 24. when the true worshipers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit ; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.

In that day (said Jesus to his disciples) ye shall ask ME nothing. John xvi. 23. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in my name, he will give it you *.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, by him. Col. iii. 17.

Fear God, and give glory to him. Rev. xiv. 7.

Worship God. Rev. xix. 10.

There is none other God but ONE ; 1 Cor. viii. 4—6. for though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be Gods many and Lords many) to us there is but ONE God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

* "In my name," we conceive, implies "agreeable to my doctrine and example ;" not merely using the form of words.

1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

John xvii. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

1 Tim. i. 17. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

See also Eph. iii. 14. Eph. iv. 6.

The Authority & Headship of Christ.

James iv. 12. **THERE** is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy; for Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Mat. xvii. 5. Behold a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.

John viii. 42. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

1 Cor. xi. 3. But I would have you know, that

the head of every man is Christ ; and the head of Christ is God.

And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church ; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. Col. i. 18.

For the Father loveth the son and hath given all things into his hand. John iii. 35.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins. Acts, v. 35.

God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that (at or) in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 9—11.

And hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Eph. i 22.

To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins. Acts, x. 43.

Mat. xxviii
18.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

John v. 22.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son, that all men should honour the son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the son honour-eth not the Father who hath sent him.

Heb. vii.
26.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, for such an high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

Qualifications for Membership.

Mat. iv.
17.

FROM that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven* is at hand.

Acts ii.
38.

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.

Mark i.
15.

Repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Acts xxvi.
20.

And I shewed to the gentiles that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

* "The kingdom of heaven," or, "of God," generally refers to the gospel church state, where Christ reigns as king, and men profess to be governed by his laws.

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mat. xviii. 3.

Ye must be born again. John iii. 7.

Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. John iii. 3.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. 1. John v. 1.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Rom. x. 9.

As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Rom. vi. 4.

Unity and Equality of the Members.

MOTTO.

AND THE MULTITUDE OF THEM THAT BELIEVED WERE OF ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL; NEITHER SAID ANY OF THEM THAT OUGHT OF THE THINGS HE POSSESSED WAS HIS OWN, BUT THEY HAD ALL THINGS COMMON *.

Acts iv. 32. 34, 35.

FOR we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. 1 Cor. x. 17.

* The motto serves to shew the spirit and conduct of the primitive Christians; and though not binding upon us now, is a bright example how we ought to act under similar circumstances.

1 Cor. xii.

12. 14. 20.

21, 22. 25.

26, 27.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for the body is not one member, but many; but now are there many members, yet but one body; and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you; nay, much more, those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary, that there should be no schism in the body; but the members should have the same care for one another, and whether one member *suffers*, all the members *suffer* with it, or one member be *honoured*, all the members *rejoice* with it: now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Gal. iii. 28.

1 Cor. i.

10.

For ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For as we have many members in one body and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one, members one of another.

Neither be ye called *Masters*, for one is your master, even Christ; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. Mat. xxiii. 10.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

See also John xvii. 21. Rom. v. 6. Acts i. 13. 15. 2 Cor. viii. 14. Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

The Officers of a Church,

ARE Elders*, (sometimes called Bishops, Pastors, and Overseers, or Stewards) Deacons, and Messengers.

* From the frequent mention of the word elder in the plural form in the New Testament many have inferred that more than one is authorized by the apostles; but if the subject is closely examined, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we conceive it will plainly appear that no distinct society ever elected more than one to that office: and we give it as our opinion, that the mistakes and contentions which have arisen on this subject among mankind, are owing to an improper conception of the term *church*, which, though consisting of many societies or branches, was yet but one, being properly composed of all the believers in any one town

ELDERS, &c.

SEE *Acts*, xi. 30. xiv. 23, xv. 4, 6. xvi. 4. xx. 17, 18, 28. *Eph.* iv. 11. 1 *Pet.* ii. 25. v. 1, 2. *Phil.* i. 1. 1 *Tim.* iii. 1. v. 17. *Tit.* i. 5. 9. *James* v. 14.

or city; the meeting of whom continually in one place, would be attended (in many instances) with great inconvenience; yet might, in some cases, be absolutely necessary, and was upon extraordinary occasions, practiced. See *Acts*, xiv. 27. xv. 6. 22. 1 *Cor.* xi. 29. It likewise appears, that the elders of the different societies had frequent meetings, either by themselves, or with the whole church, to consult the general good; one of whom was appointed to preside over these assemblies, somewhat similar to the office of Timothy, who is commanded, 1 *Tim.* vi. 20, not to receive an accusation against an elder, unless before two or three witnesses. John also, in writing to the churches in Asia, addresses the angel of each separately, that is, as we conceive, the person who was appointed to such an office as was held by Timothy, and who presided over the elders of the different societies in that city.

The idea of one elder over every separate society appears still further confirmed by the particular distinction made by the apostles when writing to believers in different places, such as those in a kingdom or province, and those of a town or city, the first of whom are addressed always in the plural, as the churches of Judea, Asia, and Macedonia; but the latter in the singular, as the church of Jerusalem, the church at Philippi, Corinth, Thyatira, Sardis, &c. and as the apostles never speak of churches in the plural, when applied to any particular town or city, it follows, that when the elders of the church therein are mentioned, it must refer to the elders of the different societies or branches of the whole church in that place. See *Acts*, xv. 4. 6. xvi. 4. xx. 17. This view of the subject obviates every difficulty respecting the members of a church becoming too numerous for the management of one elder, the consideration of which necessarily calls

DEACONS.

Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8. 10, 12,
13.

MESSENGERS.

Phil. ii. 25.

Qualifications for Office.

ELDERS, &c.

A bishop must be blameless; the ^{1 Tim. iii.}
husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, ²⁻⁷
of good behaviour, given to hospitali-
ty, apt to teach, not given to wine, no

for a branching off or forming of separate societies, without any disunion in the church; for while men adhered closely to the laws of Christ and his apostles (upon which alone Christianity is built) the unity of the church might have been preserved; notwithstanding its being composed of ten thousand separate societies or branches. But when opinions became the bond of union, (as is the case in most churches of the present day) then that union became extinct, and instead of harmony and love, feuds and animosities took place, to the utter disgrace of the Christian name, and which cannot be expected to cease until men (instead of mixing human opinions with divine precepts) learn simply to obey the commands of Christ; an adherence to which will infallibly destroy all systems that are not founded in truth. And as schisms have so long prevailed, a society like ours is perhaps best calculated to prevent them in future, as we profess obedience to the laws of Christ alone, not admitting any man's opinion as the standard for the church, nor yet the opinions of the church to be the standard for its members.

striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient; not a brawler; not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection, with all gravity: not a *novice*, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil: moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without.

Titus i.
5—9.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, and unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality; a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1 Cor. iv.
2.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

DEACONS.

1 Tim. iii.
8.

LIKEWISE must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given

to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience: and let these also be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and there own houses well.

*Mode of electing or appointing,
Laying on of Hands, &c.*

WHEREFORE, brethren, look ye Acts, vi. out among *yourselves* seven men of 35 honest report, full of the holy spirit, whom we may appoint over this business.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, &c.

LAYING ON OF HANDS *.

And when they had prayed they laid Acts, vi. 6. their hands on them.

And when they had fasted and Acts, xiii. prayed they laid their hands on them 1. 3. and sent them away.

Wherefore I put thee in remem- 2 Tim. i. brance that thou stir up the gift of 6.

* This custom, though not accompanied with miraculous gifts (as in the first ages), we follow as a solemn act in the separating of such persons as the church thinks proper to elect to office.

God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

1 Tim. iv.
14.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

The Duty of Officers.

1 Pet. v.
1. 3.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Acts xx.
28.

Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the holy spirit hath made you overseers. Feed the church of God.

1 Tim. iv.
13.

Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

2 Tim. ii.
15. 24. 25

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

Preach the word; be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Titus ii. 7, 8.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. 1 Tim. vi. 17.

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. Titus iii. 8.

These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee. Titus ii. 15.

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 1 Tim. v. 19, 20.

And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. v. 4.

Duty of Members to Officers.

1 Tim. v.
17.

LET the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who *labour* in the word and doctrine; for the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and, The labourer is worthy of his reward*.

1 Thes. v.
12, 13.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work sake.

Heb. xiii.
7, 17.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith (*fidelity*) follow, considering the end of their conversation.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief.

2 Thes. iii.
6.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free

* The reward of elders, recommended by the apostle, appears to us to relate to that special honor which faithful labourers in the gospel are intitled to; not to any pecuniary remuneration for their work; and if in any place maintenance is spoken of or implied, it relates solely to such as had an especial commission, and travelled from place to place to preach the gospel.

course and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

See also Eph. vi. 18, 19.

Duty of Members to each other.

THIS is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. John xv. 12.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also. 1 John iv. 7, 8, 21.

Love one another with a pure heart fervently. 1 Pet. i. 22.

Let brotherly love continue. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Heb. xiii. 1, 3.

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even Eph. iv. 32.

as God, for Christ's sake* hath forgiven you.

Phil. ii. 3. Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory, but, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves.

1 Pet. iv. 8, 9, 10. And, above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another, without grudging.

Eph. v. 21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Eph. vi. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Gal. vi. 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.

Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

* Where the common translation says "God for Christ's sake," &c. it ought to be rendered, "even as God (in or) through Christ," &c.

Conduct of Women in the Church.

Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; and if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

But I suffer not a woman to teach*, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression. 1 Tim. ii. 12.

See also 1 Cor. xi. 5. 13.

* Those passages in the New Testament that give directions how women should pray or prophesy, do not say *in the church*; but if the contrary could be proved, we should then suppose it meant, when they joined in public worship *with the men*, where the act of the speaker is considered as the act of the whole, or else when any woman was under the influence of the spirit; concerning which no particular rule could be given. But as miraculous gifts have ceased, we consider the rule of the apostle as to the conduct of women in the church absolute; the prohibition not being founded on custom but the appointment of God, in the subordination of the woman to the man in consequence of the priority of his creation and her first disobedience.

*The Order of the Church in her
Assemblies.*

- ² Cor. xiv. ²⁶ 40. 33. **LET** all things be done unto edifying. Let all things be done decently and in order; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.
- Heb. x. ²⁴. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.
- ¹ Thes. v. ¹¹. Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.
- Jude xx. ²¹. Building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
- ² Tim. ii. ¹⁶. 23. Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will encrease unto more ungodliness. Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.
- ¹ Pet. iv. ¹¹. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
-

Of Prayer.

WHEN ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do ; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking ; be not ye, therefore, like unto them ; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. *After this manner*, therefore, pray ye---Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven ; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ; and lead us not into temptation *, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Mat. vi. 7.

9.

Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Phil. iv. 6.

I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and ho-

1 Tim. ii.

1. 8.

* Or severe trials.

nesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

I will, therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.

1 Cor. xiv. 15. I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the understanding also.

James v. 13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.

1 Thes. v. 17, 18. Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Fasting.

Mat. vi. 16. 18. WHEN ye fast*, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast; verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou ap-

* This we conceive to be a necessary duty upon particular occasions, when the church shall appoint, to prepare the mind for some special work.

pear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the holy spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them: and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. Acts xiii. 2.

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and prayed, with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed. Acts xiv. 23.

Preaching.

HOW then shall they call on him on whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent*? As it is written, How beau- Rom. x. 14, 15, 16.

* When the apostle says, "How can they preach except they be sent?" we conceive it related in a peculiar manner to the first ages of Christianity, when the church possessed miraculous powers, which have long since ceased. However, the church is, in our opinion, still competent to determine who of their body is qualified to preach.

tiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Mark xvi.
15.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark vi.
12.

And they went and preached that men should repent.

Luke xxiv
46. 47.

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

2 Cor. iv.
5.

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesu's sake.

Teaching.

Mat. xxviii.
19. 20.

GO ye, therefore, and teach* all nations, baptizing † them in (*or* into) the name of the Father, and of the

* This, though sometimes the same as preaching, in a strict and proper sense is different; the design of preaching being to call sinners to repentance, who were afterwards to be united to a church, to be fully instructed into the doctrines of Christ.

† This is a Greek word, with an English termination; its true meaning *immersion*.

Much stress having been laid upon the use of the

son, and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.

words, "In the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit," from which we see it our duty to depart; in order to avoid being pertinaciously singular, and in justification of our conduct, we offer the following reasons.—

First, because there is no example upon record that proves them to have been used by the apostles, but rather the contrary; sometimes baptizing in the name of the Lord, or in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Secondly, because the constant use of the words would appear both absurd and unnecessary. As well might we suppose that Christ used words in a similar way, when he says, "I have come in my Father's name;" John v. 43. "The works which I do in my Father's name bear witness of me;" John x. 25. Or that the name of Christ was to be mentioned in every act of the Christian; because the apostle says, "Whatever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," Col. iii. 17.; an idea in the highest degree unreasonable.

Thirdly, because the Greek preposition *eis*, *eis*, does not signify *in*—but *to*, or *into*, *eis to onoma*, *eis to onoma*, properly meaning *into the name*. See Williams's Greek Concordance, p. 203. Purvis's Humble Attempt, p. 44, 45. Lindsay's Catechist, p. 30. Clarke Against Nelson, p. 95 and 205. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 132. But especially Scarlett's translation of the New Testament, who has followed this rule in most places, in opposition to the common translation; particularly, Acts viii. 16. 1 Cor. i 13, 14. where the same words *eis to onoma*, *eis to onoma*, are used, as in Mat. xxviii. 19. And if this is the true translation of those words, we may find an explanation of their meaning by referring to a note subjoined on 1 Cor. x. 2. of the said new translation, where it is said, 'They were all baptized into Moses, "That is, initiated into the Mosaic religion;" therefore being baptized into Christ must intend being initiated into the

Acts v. 42. And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach, and preach Jesus Christ.

1 Tim. iv. 11. These things command and teach.

Col. i. 28. Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. ii. 2. The things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Exhortation.

Heb. iii. 13. **EXHORT** one another daily, while it is called to-day.

Heb. xiii. 22. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.

Heb. x. 25. Exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Christian religion; consequently being baptized into the name of the Father, &c. &c. must signify the initiation into that religion which the God and Father of all revealed to mankind by the ministry of his son Christ Jesus, and confirmed by the gifts of the holy spirit: that is, the communication of an extraordinary power to Jesus and his apostles.

See Acts xix. 3. Rom. vi. 3. 4. Gal. iii. 28. of Scarlett's New Testament.

Singing.

IS any merry, let him sing psalms. James v.

I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. ^{13.} 1 Cor. xiv. ^{15.}

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, by him. ^{17.} Col. iii. 16,

See also Eph. v. 19.

Sending of Preachers.

THEN pleased it the apostles and elders, with the *whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Acts xv. ^{22.}

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the holy spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them; and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. Acts, xiii. ^{2, 3.}

On the Maintenance of Preachers.

Mat. x. 10. THE workman is worthy of his meat.

Luke x. 7. The labourer is worthy of his hire*.

1 Cor. ix. 14. Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Baptism.

Mat. xxviii. 19. GO ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit.

Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.

* We know of no other place where our Lord hath so ordained than Mat. x. 10. Luke x. 7. which plainly relate to those of the first ages of Christianity who were appointed by a special commission to go from city to city and from nation to nation to publish the glad tidings of salvation, and to them only; not to elders who, by their stationary situation, were capable of getting their bread by other means; which is evident from a consideration of Paul's address to the elder of the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. 35. where he says, Ye know that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to those that were with me. I have shewn you (elders) *that so labouring* ye ought to support the weak, &c. See also 2 Thes. iii. 7—13.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent Acts ii. 38.
and be baptized, every one of you, in 41.
the name of Jesus Christ, for the re-
mission of sins.

Then they that gladly received his
word were baptized.

But when they believed Philip Acts viii.
preaching the things concerning the 12. 36, 37,
kingdom of God and the name (*or* reli- 38.
gion) of Jesus Christ, they were bap-
tized, both men and women.

And the eunuch said, See, here is
water, what doth hinder me to be bap-
tized? and Philip said, If thou be-
lievest with all thy heart, thou mayest :
and he answered and said, I believe
that Jesus Christ is the son of God :
and he commanded the chariot to stand
still, and they went down both into
the water, both Philip and the eunuch,
and he baptized him.

Can any man forbid water that these Acts x. 47.
should not be baptized, which have 48.
received the holy spirit as well as we ?
And he commanded them to be bap-
tized in the name of the Lord.

Then said Paul, John verily baptiz- Acts xix.
ed with the baptism of repentance, say- 4, 5.
ing unto the people that they should
believe on him that should come after
him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Rom. vi.
3, 4.

Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even we also should walk in newness of life.

Col. ii. 12.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

1 Pet. iii.
21.

The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Gal. iii. 27.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Eph. iv. 5.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism.



On the Lord's Supper.*

AND as they were eating, Jesus Mat. xxvi.
 took bread and blessed it, and brake it, 2.—32.
 and gave it to the disciples, and said,
 Take, eat; this is my body: and he
 took the cup, and gave thanks, and
 gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all
 of it; for this is my blood of the new
 testament, which is shed for many for
 the remission of sins: but I say unto
 you, I will not drink henceforth of this
 fruit of the vine, until that day when
 I drink it new with you in my Father's
 kingdom.

See also Mat. xiv. 22. 26.

And he said unto them, With desire Luk. xxii.
 have I desired to eat this *passover* 15—20.
 with you, before I suffer; for I say

* This we consider, as a social meal, where bread is broken, and wine is drank, by the body at large, in the evening, as often as the church shall appoint; no precise period being laid down in the Scriptures. Some think this is designed to commemorate the death of Christ; but the apostle laying a greater stress on his resurrection, and one of the last examples of Christ being to teach humanity, love, and harmony, others conceive it rather descriptive of the union of the church, by their partaking together of the same bread and drinking of the same cup, when all the societies, or branches of the church in a city, &c. came together in one place. See Cor. ii.

unto you, I will not eat any more thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

1 Cor. v.
7, 8

Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our *passover* is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Cor. x.
16, 17.

The *cup of blessing*, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The *bread* which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

For I have received *of the Lord* that which also *I delivered* unto you, that

the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed; took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me: for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this, cup ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Collections for the Poor.

YE have the poor with you always; Mark xiv. and whensoever ye will, ye may do 7. them good.

I have shewed you all things, how Acts xx. that, so labouring, ye ought to sup- 35. port the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said It is more blessed to give than to receive.

To do good and to communicate Heb. xiii. forget not, for with such sacrifices God 16. is well pleased.

Distributing to the necessity of Rom. xii. saints. 13.

1 Cor. xvi. Upon the first day of the week let
 2. every one of you lay by him in store,
 as God hath prospered him,

2 Cor. viii. For if there be first a willing mind
 12. it is accepted: according to that which
 a man hath, and not according to that
 he hath not.

1 Cor. ix. He that soweth sparingly, shall reap
 5. also sparingly: and he that soweth
 bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.

Gal. vi. 10. As we have, therefore, opportunity,
 let us do good unto all men, especially
 unto them who are of the household of
 faith.

2 Cor. ix. Every man, according as he pur-
 7, 8. poseth in his heart, so let him give;
 not grudgingly, or of necessity, for
 God loveth a chearful giver; and God
 is able to make all grace abound to-
 wards you, that ye, always having all
 sufficiency in all things, may abound
 to every good work.

1 John iii. Whoso hath this world's goods, and
 17. seeth his brother have need, and shut-
 teth up his bowels of compassion from
 him, how dwelleth the love of God in
 him?

Mark ix. For whosoever shall give you a cup
 41. of water to drink, in my name, (because
 ye belong to Christ) verily I say unto
 you, he shall not lose his reward.

Conduct under Persecution.

WHEN they deliver you up, take Mat. x. 19,
no thought how or what ye shall 20.
speak*, for it shall be given you in
that same hour what ye shall speak;
for it is not ye that speak, but the
spirit of your Father which speaketh
in you.

Be not afraid of them that kill the Luke xii.
body, and after that have no more that 4. 7.
they can do; the very hairs of your
head are all numbered; fear not, there-
fore.

In your patience possess ye your Luke xxi.
souls. 19.

If ye suffer for righteousness sake, 1 Pet. iii.
happy are ye! And be not afraid of 14, 15, 16,
their terror, neither be troubled, but 17.
sanctify the Lord God in your hearts;
and be ready always to give an answer

* When our Saviour directs his disciples to
“take no thought what they should speak,” Mat.
x. 19, 20. we conceive this extended no farther
than to the first ages, when miraculous gifts were
bestowed; but though at this day there can be no
foundation to expect such interference as the apostles
had, yet there is no reason to doubt of the necessary
support under every trial we may be called to en-
dure; for the promise is, “As thy day is, so shall
thy strength be; and he hath said, I will never
leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly
say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what
man can do unto me.” Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ; for it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing.

Rom. xii.
14.

Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not.

Mat. v. 44.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

1 Cor. iv.
12 13.

Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat.

1 Pet. iv.
16. 19.

If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Wherefore let them that suffer, according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Rom. xii.
21.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

See also Acts iv. 1---20. v. 17 to the end. xix. 19---26.

Differences.

DARE any of you, having a matter 1 Cor. vi. 1—8. against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Offences.

IF thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between Mat. xvii. 15—17. him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

If thy brother trespass against thee, Lukexvii. 3, 4. rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive

him ; and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day, turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him*.

Conduct toward Disorderly Members.

Gal. vi. 1. **BRETHREN**, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness ; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.

1 Thes. v. 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly.

James v. 19, 20. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Rom. xvi. 17, 18. I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them ; for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

* The rule of conduct under such circumstances plainly implies the necessity of Christian fellowship and church communion ; otherwise, there could be no submission paid to this law.

Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. 2 Thes. iii. 6.

Now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 1 Cor. v. 11.

A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*. Titus iii. 10, 11.

And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Jude 22, 23.

See also 1 Cor. v. 1---5. 2 Cor. ii. 6---11. 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15. 1 Tim. i. 20. vi. 5. 2 Tim. iii. 5.

* Titus iii. 10, 11. From hence it is clear, that heresy does not consist in a mere difference of opinion, but in wickedly attempting to sow divisions for sinister purposes, wherein the party is condemned in his own mind.



On the Observance of Days, particularly a Sabbath.*

Mark ii,
27, 28.

HE said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Rom. xiv.
5.

One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike; let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Col. ii. 16.

Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath; which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.

* Great stress having been laid on the observance of days, we conceive it necessary to state, that, according to our views, no one day is more holy than another; but that every day ought to be devoted unto God: and if we refrain from business on the first day of the week, it is not because we esteem it a command of Christ, but for the convenience of meeting together; and it becomes necessary for such as think differently, who are strenuous advocates for the observance of a sabbath, to shew their authority for so doing, as well as for altering the day; and why they do not observe it in the strictness of the letter of the Mosaic law, by keeping also the sabbath of years, and the fiftieth year, which are as expressly enjoined as the seventh day? But the apostle informs us, they were but shadows of things to come, and he considers those weak, and in danger, who observe days.

For he is our peace, who hath made Eph. ii. 14.
both one, and hath broken down the 15.
middle wall of partition between us.

Blotting out the hand writing of Col. ii. 14.
ordinances, that was against us, which 20, 22.
was contrary to us, and took it out of
the way, nailing it to his cross.

Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ
from the rudiments of the world, why
as though living in the world, are ye
subject to ordinances, after the com-
mandments and doctrines of men?

For the kingdom of God is not Rom. xiv.
meat and drink, but righteousness. and 17.
peace and joy in the holy spirit.

See also Luke xiii. 15. xiv. 1, 7.
2 Cor. iii. 7, 13. iv. 3.

Duty to Magistrates.

SUBMIT yourselves to every ordi- 1 Pet. ii.
nance of men for the Lord's sake, whe- 13—17.
ther it be to the king, as supreme, or
unto governors, as unto them that are
sent by him for the punishment of evil
doers: for so is the will of God, that
with well doing, ye may put to silence
the ignorance of foolish men; as free,
and not using your liberty for a cloak
of maliciousness, but as the servants of

God. Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Titus iii.

1.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

Rom. xiii.

1.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God*; whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation; for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.

* Government is of God; the design of government being to restrain evil, and to encourage virtue. Happy would it be for mankind if all governments were conducted according to the directions and designs of God, as laid down in his word; but this never has been the case, as the rules of justice are frequently violated; nevertheless it is the duty of the Christian (though a sufferer,) patiently to submit, knowing that vengeance belongeth to God, who will repay; for the example of Christ is the Christian's rule of conduct. But though resistance is incompatible with the profession of a Christian, we conceive he ought to bear a testimony against every violation of justice, unless such a testimony has a tendency to inflame the minds of those who act unjustly, and thereby cause them to commit greater acts of violence; for in all cases care should be taken to blend the harmlessness of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent.

*With respect to War, or bearing of
Arms*.*

FROM whence come wars and James iv.
fightings among you? come they not^{1.}
hence, even of your lusts that war in
your members?

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up Mat. xxvi.
again thy sword into his place; for all^{52.}
they that take the sword, shall perish
with the sword.

For the son of man is not come to Luke ix.
destroy men's lives, but to save them.^{56.}

My kingdom is not of this world; John xviii.
if my kingdom were of this world,^{36.}
then would my servants fight.

They are not of the world, even as John xvii.
I am not of the world.^{16.}

He that leadeth into captivity, shall Rev. xiii.
go into captivity: he that killeth with^{10.}
the sword, must be killed with the
sword. *Here is the patience and
faith of the saints.*

* As the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, his disciples ought not to interfere with its maxims or politics, or in any degree take an active part in the setting up or demolition of the governments of the world; for as Christ, who is the prince of peace, came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, so his disciples ought not, on any occasion whatever, to wield the sword.

Heb. xii.
14.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

RELATIVE DUTIES*.

Husbands.

Eph v. 25.
28. 33.

HUSBANDS, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

*As much unhappiness has arisen among families on account of the ignorance of the different branches respecting their duty, or for want of submission to it, we have thought proper to subjoin these laws, relating to Christians in the world, and in their families; being persuaded an attention thereto will produce the most beneficial effects; for however humbling a submission to these duties may be to the pride of the world, it is the Christian's glory to obey God, who lays claim to the most perfect submission to his will; especially as all his commands are connected with their happiness; and particularly as obedience to these laws highly conduce to their present as well as future felicity.

Let every one of YOU IN PARTICULAR love his wife even as himself.

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Col.iii.19.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

Let not the husband put away his wife. 1 Cor. vii. 11.

Wives.

WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body; therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands IN EVERY THING. Eph. v. 22, 24.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Col.iii.18.

Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear; whose 1 Pet. iii. 1.

adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well.

Titus ii. 4.
5.

Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

1 Tim. ii.
11—14.

Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection; but I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not (first) deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.

1 Cor. vii.
10.

Let not the wife depart from her husband.

Eph. v. 33.

And the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Parents.

Fathers, provoke not your children Col.iii.21.
to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Fathers, provoke not your children Eph.vi.4.
to wrath, but bring them up in the
nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Children.

CHILDREN, obey your parents in Eph.vi.1.
the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy
father and mother, (which is the first
commandment with promise) that it
may be well with thee, and thou may-
est live long in the earth.

Children, obey your parents in all Col.iii.20.
things; for this is well pleasing unto
the Lord.

Masters.

MASTERS, give unto your serv- Col.iv.1,
ants that which is just and equal;
knowing that ye also have a master in
heaven. Continue in prayer, and
watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Eph. vi. 9. Forbearing threatening; knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Servants.

Eph. vi.
5—7. **SERVANTS**, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will; doing service as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Col. iii.
22—25. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ; but he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons.

Servants, be subject to your masters 1 Pet. ii. 18. with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

Let as many servants as are under 1 Tim. vi. 1. the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed; and they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.

Exhort servants to be obedient to Titus ii. 9, 10. their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.



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BYE-LAWS.

1. **T**HAT no person be admitted a member of this church till after a probation of three months*, that

* As in this respect, our conduct *seems* to differ from the practice of the churches in the days of the apostles, we think the alteration of the situation of the church justifies such a change. As we have stated, we adopt this method in order to have a more perfect knowledge of our members, and of their design in uniting with us; a circumstance that is likely to strengthen the union, which a less rigid conduct might disturb; especially when it is considered, that a public profession of Christianity by baptism and union to a church in the first ages exposed the party to hatred and persecution, which has not been the case since the *world* has become *Christian*; for instead of scorn and obloquy, honor and emolument have frequently been attached to a profession of religion; which has opened the door to hypocrisy: consequently there is room for suspicion where no trial can be made: and as the professors of Christianity are yet divided respecting the doctrines and discipline of a church, there is a still stronger reason why Christians, who profess to be governed only by the laws of Christ alone, should be cautious with whom they unite.

But though we judge this restriction necessary, it cannot well be thought improper, as the candidates are not debarred from any advantages of the closest union, except that of having a voice in the

thereby due time may be afforded for them to obtain a proper knowledge of the laws and order of the church, to enable them to decide upon the propriety of their union, as well as to give an opportunity to the church to judge of their eligibility; the elder being required to converse with them, and to enquire into their character, and to make his report thereon.

2. The election of members shall be by ballot: a majority of members present to decide.

3. That one of the members shall hold the office of elder for three months*;

church, or being capable of bearing any office therein; and had such been the rule of the first churches, the three thousand who offered themselves might have been said to be added to the church, though they were only candidates.

Another reason may also be given for the restriction we make; and that is, because the church does not now possess the power of discerning the spirit and intentions of those who unite, which the apostles did; through whose means judgments were sometimes exercised upon wicked professors; a knowledge of which would deter those from uniting themselves to a church who were not actuated by the purest intentions, which there is reason to fear is not now the case.

*As it is not commanded that an elder once elected, should be perpetual, and much evil and many corruptions having flowed from a perpetuity of this office, we conceive not only the right of election but the time of continuance, ought to rest with the church, in order to guard against innovations, no positive rule being given by Christ or his apostles. Moreover, as a church, in its infancy, is obliged to make choice of the best means for its improvement,

to be chosen by the greatest number of ballots; but when the number of ballots for two or more members shall be equal, then the election shall be decided by drawing lots.

4. The elder, upon first entering upon the duties of the office, shall read the laws publicly.

5. The elder, upon having duly filled his office for three months, is not to be again eligible to any office till after the expiration of three months.

6. That two members be elected to serve as deacons, for the space of three months---their election to be by ballot; as for the elder; and having duly filled their office, shall be eligible to the eldership, if the church shall judge them proper for that station.

7. That the rent of the place where the church may assemble, shall be provided for by voluntary subscriptions; and that a penny per week shall also be collected from every individual for coals, candles, &c.

a perpetuity of office would deprive the church of the gifts of its members in its improved state, when its numbers and talents might be considerably advanced; which is a strong argument for the limited rule of its officers.

The Meetings of the Church,

ARE on the first day of the week, at half past ten o'clock in the morning, when three or four persons, appointed by the church, speak on any part of the Scriptures as agreed upon among themselves, beginning and concluding with prayer and singing. Also at four o'clock in the afternoon, when they drink tea together, and confer on religious subjects. Again, at six in the evening, when the same order is observed as in the morning.

After the evening service is over, the wants of the poor members are enquired into and relieved ; besides which there is held a meeting of a Benevolent Society, instituted for the relief of such distressed persons, not united with the church, as may be recommended, let their sentiments or connections be what they may---their distress, as fellow-men, being a sufficient claim to their attention ; in doing which they humbly attempt to imitate their great example Jesus Christ, a man approved of God, who went about doing good.

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ERRATA.

- P. 29, *To the texts enumerated add James, i. 9. 10.*
 32, l. 18. *for steward God, read steward of God.*
 48, l. 6 *from bottom, for elder read elders.*
 51, l. 6. *from bottom, for humanity read humility.*
 52, l. 17. *for that ye be, read that ye may be.*
 57, *Title Offences should be Private Offences.*
 58, l. 7 *from bottom, for there read their.*
 60, l. 9 *from bottom, for he read the.*
 71, l. 6 *from bottom, dele alone.*
last line, for Cor. ii. read 1 Cor. xi. 20.

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